

SELF-MEDICATION PREVALENCE AND RELATED FACTORS AMONG BACCALAUREATE NURSING STUDENTS

JYOTI KATHWAL^{1*}, RAMANDEEP KAUR² & KHINA SHARMA³

¹Principal, GMCH College of Nursing, Chandigarh.

^{2,3}Tutor, College of nursing, Government medical college and hospital, Chandigarh.

ABSTRACT

Self-medication is act of ingestion of drugs without prescription and it is quiet common among the health care professionals as they have basic knowledge of pharmacology. Nurses have the access to the medication and their prime role is drug administration, hence they are prone to indulge in self-medication. Therefore, study was done with an objective for identification of patterns and self medication related factors among Baccalaureate nursing students. Structured self-reporting was the tool used for collection of data and analysis of data was done by applying descriptive and inferential statistics. Results revealed that fever (75.9%) was the major ailment for which self-medication was sought, followed by headache (71.6%), common cold (61.2%) and body ache (42.2%). Majority of participants believe that their symptoms are not serious (84.5%) and they have sufficient knowledge about medicines (71.5%) and that's why they prefer self-medication over medical advice. 32.7% also believes that self-medication saves time. The most common method for obtaining the self-medication among participants is to ask straight ways to chemist/pharmacist by stating the drug name (63.8%), followed by explaining symptoms to chemist and asking for medication Conclusion – Taking medicines without doctors' prescription is common in Baccalaureate nursing students which need to be monitored and controlled to prevent abuse and dependency on drugs.

KEYWORDS: Nursing students, chemist/pharmacist, self-medication, World Health Organization & Baccalaureate

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INTRODUCTION

Self-medication is the act of taking drugs by a person on his/her own without consulting a physician. It is the irregular and continuous consumption of the medicines to treat minor illnesses at home¹. According to World Health Organization, Self-medication is the practice of taking drugs without consulting general medical practitioner². Medicines used for self-medication are often known as over the counter drugs or non-prescription drugs. These drugs can be received without prescription or resubmitting old prescriptions to purchase these. Self-medication is considered as a paramount component of patient behaviour in coping with commonly faced health issues for which a person does not feel the need for going to the doctor. Self-medication can save time and cost effective too but can be harmful too³. Self-medication may lead to reduced opportunities for counseling related to various therapies like diet and exercise, not appropriate diagnosis, increases morbidity due to drug ill-effects. Under dose of drugs may not cure the disease completely and over dosage may cause defects in vital organs like kidneys and liver^{4,5}.

Self-medication is prevalent among general population as well as among health care providers. Because, health care personnel are aware about drug which lead to difference in incidence and prevalence among them than

common population. In a study conducted by Badiger S et al, self-medication is reported among 92% of the students in medical field with 59% in non-medical students in India⁶. Worldwide, various studies have reported that the self-medication practice among the nursing students⁷. This may be due to their curriculum that makes them acquire basic knowledge about medicine. Also, the youth are vastly influenced by the internet and technology and can get knowledge about most drugs from advertisements as well as from google which may lead to danger of irrational self-medication practices. However, in our country this practice of self-medication among nursing students is not fully explored. The present study is done to identify the pattern of self-medication among undergraduate nursing students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study was conducted among undergraduate nursing students using cross-sectional design. The study participants were students of baccalaureate nursing 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th year. A self-structured research tool with open and closed ended questions was used for data collection. Tool was validated by experts and reliability was assessed before data collection. Research tool consisted of socio demographic profile and nine questions related to the self-medication administration. Tool was distributed through online mode and Total 117 students responded. Data was analysed with help of SPSS 20 software by descriptive and inferential statistics. Results were presented in tabulated and figure form.

RESULTS

Present research was conducted on 117 Baccalaureate Nursing students, out of which 108 (93.1%) were between the age of 18-22 years. The age mean of participants was 20.6years with SD ± 1.4 years and range 18-25years. 81% participants were females and among these 117 students, 37 (31.9%), 31 (26.7%), 20(25.9) and 18 (15.5%) were studying in their B.Sc. first, second, third and final year respectively. 16.4% participants had a previous medical history. 109 (94%) students reported to practice of taking medicine without prescription.(Refer table 1).

Table 1: Socio Demographic Characteristics of Participants N=116

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
• 18-22years	108	93.1
• 23-27years	08	06.9
	Mean Age \pm SD (Range)=20.6 \pm 1.4(18-25years)	
Gender		
• Female	94	81
• Male	22	19
Years of course		
• 1 st year	37	31.9
• 2 nd year	31	26.7
• 3 rd year	20	25.9
• 4 th year	18	15.5
Do you have any medical history?		
• Yes	19	16.4
• No	97	83.6
Ever practiced self-medication?		
• Yes	109	94%
• No	07	06%

In a multiple response question, it was found that fever (75.9%) was the major ailment for which self-medication was sought, followed by headache (71.6%), common cold (61.2%) and body ache (42.2%) (Refer figure 1)

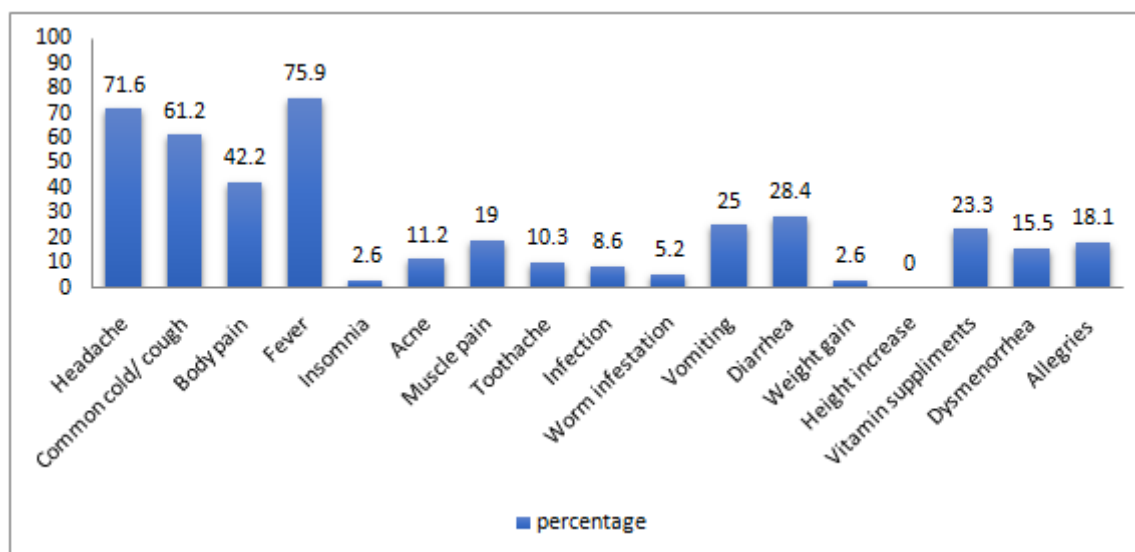


Figure 1: Symptoms for which Self-Medication is Done

Current study explained that the usual method for obtaining the self-medication among participants is to ask straight ways to chemist/pharmacist by stating the drug name (63.8%), followed by explaining symptoms to chemist and asking for medication.(Refer figure 2).

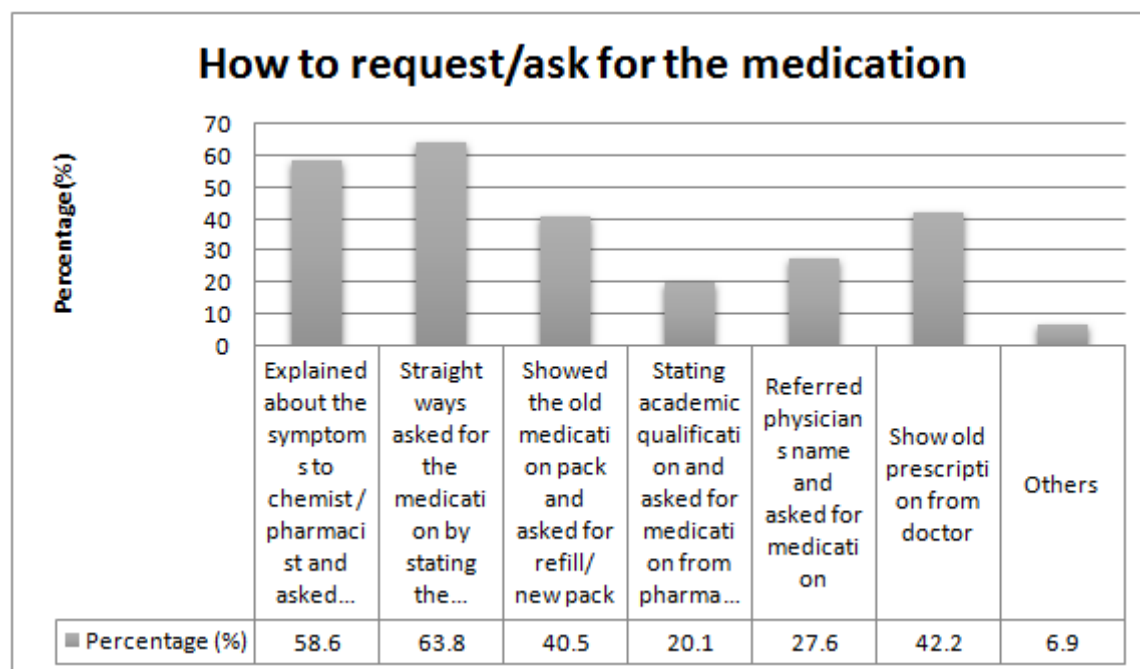


Figure 2: Methods of Asking to Medication

Figure 3 depicts that, majority of participants believe that their symptoms are not serious (84.5%) and they have sufficient knowledge about medicines (71.5%) and that's why they prefer self-medication over medical advice. 32.7% also

believes that self-medication saves time.

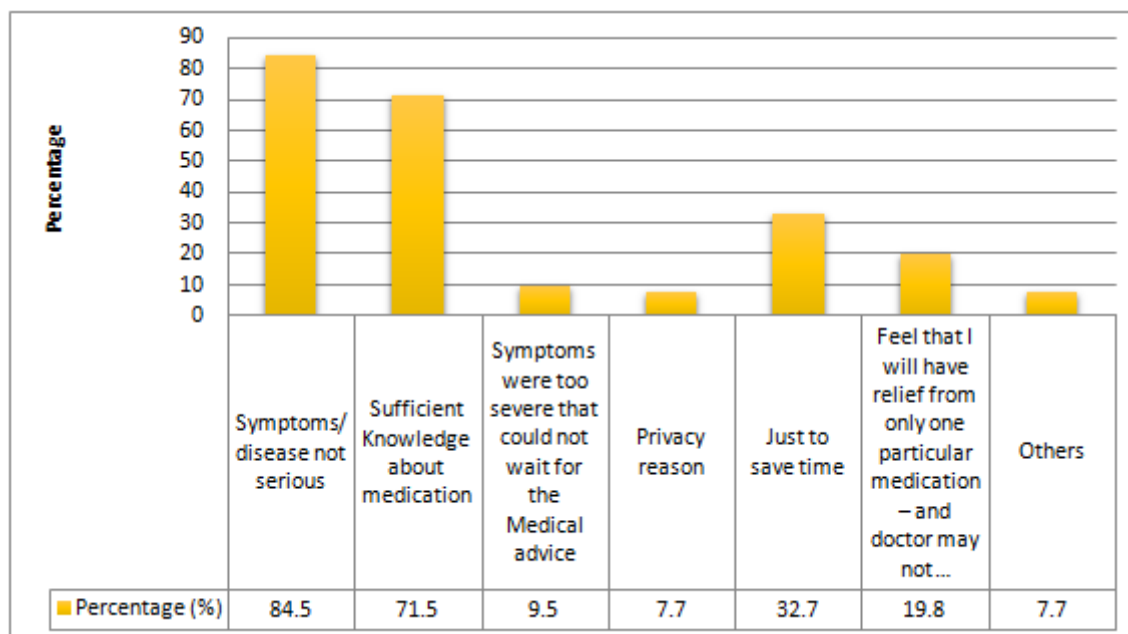


Figure 3: Reason of Doing Self-Medication over Seeking Medical Advice

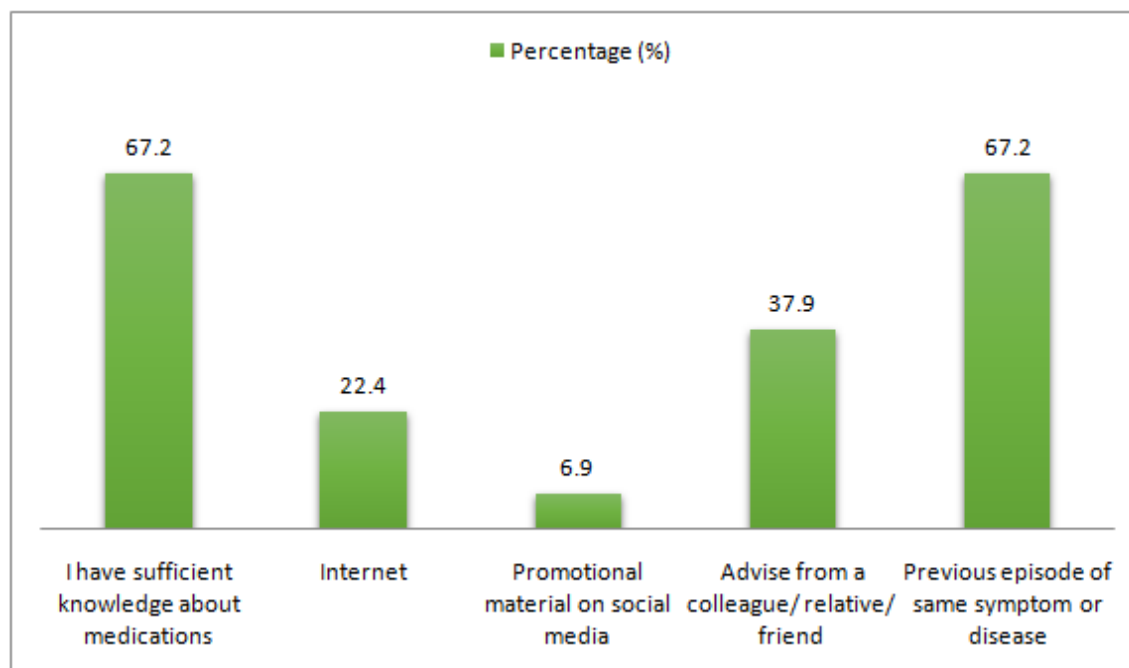


Figure 4: Source of Information for Self Medication

About the source of information for self-medication, 67.2% participants believe that they have sufficient knowledge about medications and they had previous episode of same symptoms, 37.9% reveals that they took advice from colleague/relative or friend for self-medication. 22.4% also reported that their source of information for self-medication was internal (Refer figure 4).

Out of the nursing students interviewed, 103(88.8%) self-medicate themselves whenever symptoms appear, 5.2% had even experienced side-effects/ adverse effects while on self-medication. 01 student also experienced severity of symptoms due to self-medication. 02 students also reported that they have also taken self-medication for the purpose of increasing performance in studies.(Refer table 2)

Table 2: Frequency Distribution of Pattern of Self-Medication N=116

Variable	Frequency(f)	Percentage(%)
1. How frequently you self-medicate?		
• Monthly	11	9.5
• Weekly	01	0.9
• Whenever experienced symptoms	103	88.8
• Regularly	01	0.9
• Daily		
2. Have you ever experienced any side effects or adverse effects due to self-medication?		
• Yes	6	5.2
• No	110	94.8
3. Have you ever experienced severity of symptoms due to self-medication?		
• Yes	01	0.9
• No	115	99.1
4. Have you ever used medication from your hospital?		
• Yes	27	23.3
• No	89	76.7
5. Have you ever used any medication for more concentration in your studies or improving your performance in exams?		
• Yes	02	1.7
• No	114	98.3

DISCUSSION

Present research was conducted to assess the self-medication prevalence and concerned factors among undergraduate nursing students. Out of 116 nursing students, self-medication was prevalent among 109(94%) students. Same findings were seen in a research done by Farooq S et al (2020), 89.6% nursing students practiced self-medication⁸. The cause for the high prevalence of self-medication may be due to the convenient availability to almost all kinds of drugs in the chemist shops. Prime reasons for population in developing countries to purchase medicines directly from chemists are easy, economical and time saving than visiting physician.

Our study revealed that fever (75.9%) was the major ailment for which self-medication was sought, followed by headache (71.6%), common cold (61.2%) and body ache (42.2%). These findings were in consistent with Goel D (2013), where the major ailments for self-medication were headache (42.86%), followed by fever (32.38%, common cold and abdominal pain⁹. In current study, majority of participants believe that their symptoms were minor (84.5%) and that's why they preferred self-medication over medical advice. It is correct that self-medication can manage minor disease conditions, thus decreasing the burden on health services, but can also lead to several ill effects, such as drug addiction, multidrug-resistance, and masking the sign and symptoms of underlying illnesses. 32.7% respondents also believe that self-medication saves time. A study conducted by Badiger R et al (2012) reported that students who used self-medication assumed it to be providing relief with in short span of time. ⁶. About the source of information for self-medication, majority

(67.2%) of respondents reported that they had self-confidence of sufficient knowledge about medications. However, it must be remembered that over confidence can lead to wrong self-medication and can expose them to dangers related with use of wrong medications. More about source of information, 67.2% participants also reported that they had previous episode of same symptoms, 37.9% reveals that they took advice from relative or friend for self-medication. 22.4% also reported that their source of information for self-medication was internet. Another study also mentioned source of information for self-medication in majority were medical books (39%) and classmates or seniors (38%); same findings were reported in other studies where medical students apply their curriculum knowledge many of the time to self-medicate¹⁰.

CONCLUSIONS

Medication without prescription is highly prevalent among nursing students. Therefore a comprehensive approach including awareness and education must be considered to prevent hazards associated with self-medication such as global burden of multi drug resistant microorganisms, drug dependence, drug abuse, delayed treatment, severe adverse effects etc.

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